

# FITNESS GURLS

DECEMBER 2023

PLUS

**NIKKI TREJO**

Fitness Model  
& Inspiration

**STEPHANIE  
FOURNIER**

Gorgeous &  
Glamorous

ALL ELITE'S  
**HARLEY  
CAMERON**

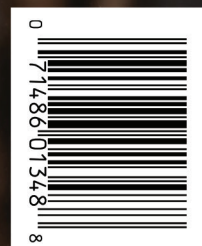
**SHE'S BACK!!!** The AEW  
Star Returns For Her  
Second Stunning Cover

(One of the  
Hottest  
Physiques in  
Wrestling)

**TRAIN HARD  
TRAIN CONFIDENT**

Simple Health Tips  
For Busy People

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FITNESS  
GURLS

DECEMBER 2023

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# WHITNEY JOHNS NUTRITION

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**Editor-in-chief**  
Jason Miller

**Additional Thanks To**  
Harley Cameron, Clint Thorpe, Ola'Jouwon Fox,  
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**Made with Love in Las Vegas**

**FITNESS  
GURLS**

# EDITOR'S LETTER

As we draw the curtain on another remarkable year, I am thrilled to present to you our December 2023 issue of 'Fitness Gurls' Magazine, a beacon of fitness, health, and vibrant living.

This issue is special for several reasons. As we stand on the brink of celebrating our 13th year in 2024, it's a moment of reflection and anticipation. We've journeyed together, growing stronger and more inspired with each passing year, and this issue is a testament to that enduring spirit.

Gracing our cover for the second time is the indomitable Harley Cameron. AEW wrestler, model, and an embodiment of strength and grace, Harley has been a source of immense inspiration. Her first cover was a fan favorite, and we knew we couldn't let this year end without bringing her dazzling energy back to our pages. Harley's story, from the wrestling ring to the world of fitness modeling, is a

narrative of perseverance and passion – themes that resonate deeply with our ethos at 'Fitness Gurls.'

As your Editor-in-Chief, it has been my honor to lead this journey. Every story we've shared, every piece of advice we've imparted, has been with the aim of empowering and enlightening our cherished readers. 'Fitness Gurls' is not just a magazine; it's a community, a movement, a part of your lives. And as we step into our 13th year, I promise that we will continue to bring you the very best of fitness, health, and inspiration.

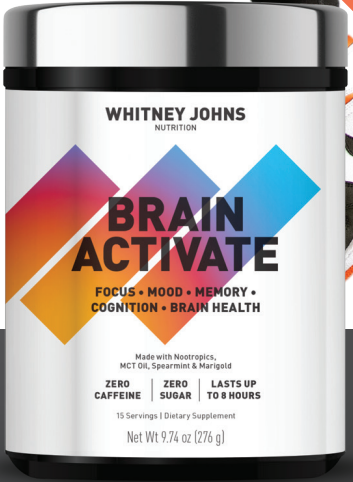
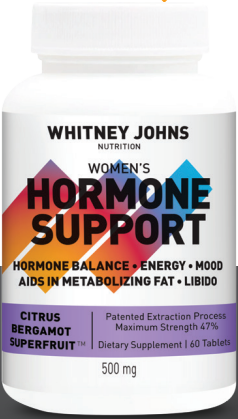
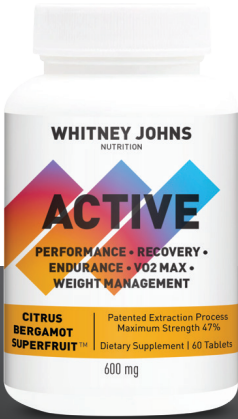
Thank you for being a part of our journey. Here's to ending 2023 on a high note and welcoming 2024 with open arms and strong hearts.

**JASON MILLER**  
Editor-in-chief

# WHITNEY JOHNS NUTRITION

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# SHIFT



## MOMENT ELECTRIC MERCEDES BENZ 280SL CONVERSION

Moment Motor Company champions the concept of modernizing classic cars with electric powertrains. They meticulously choose vintage cars that can seamlessly integrate an electric drivetrain, ensuring a harmonious blend of old charm and new technology. The Mercedes-Benz 280SL is a prime example, having been transformed into a potent electric vehicle as part of Moment's Signature series. This 280SL boasts a robust 300 horsepower and 370 lb-ft of torque, powered by a 400-volt electric system. It's not just about power; the car's already impressive suspension is complemented by this upgrade. Enhancements like advanced braking, steering, and contemporary heating and air conditioning systems are also part of the package, ensuring the car's performance is on par with its modern internals. The price for these conversions begins at \$135,000, with a fully converted vehicle available for \$250,000.

### FITNESS GURLS AWARDS

## PHYSIQUE OF THE YEAR WINNERS BY YEAR

The physique of the year awards is our pride and joy. Every year, we're thrilled to nominate the hard-working, and driven ladies by spotlighting their hustle and grind. Our readers' input makes this fun as it's a chance for them to show their appreciation for the hardworking ladies in the industry. We've had some absolutely stunning ladies take the win for Physique of the Year, like Jenna Renee (2011 and 2012), Michelle Lewin (2013), Claire Rae (2014), Janna Breslin (2015), Haley Kate (2016), Lauren Simpson (2018), and the Queen herself, Hope Beel (2017, 2019.)

It's our honor to present this award to the hardworking ladies in the fitness industry. We look forward to doing the same next year, too!



2011 | Jenna Renee



2012 | Jenna Renee



2013 | Michelle Lewin



2014 | Claire Rae



2015 | Janna Breslin



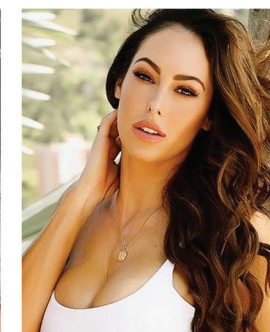
2016 | Haley Kate



2017 | Hope Beel



2018 | Lauren Simpson



2019 | Hope Beel



## WHITNEY JOHNS PHYSIQUE OF YEAR 2020, 2021 & 2023

After fan favorite Hope Beel clinched two 'Physique of the Year' titles within three years, it's time to celebrate the new reigning queen, Whitney Johns, who has now won 'Physique of the Year' an unprecedented three consecutive years.

Whitney Johns is, by all accounts, extraordinary. Her approach embodies both beauty and strength, seamlessly integrated. With this recent victory, she has not only set a new standard for the 'Fitness Gurls' but has also redefined the 'Physique of the Year' awards.

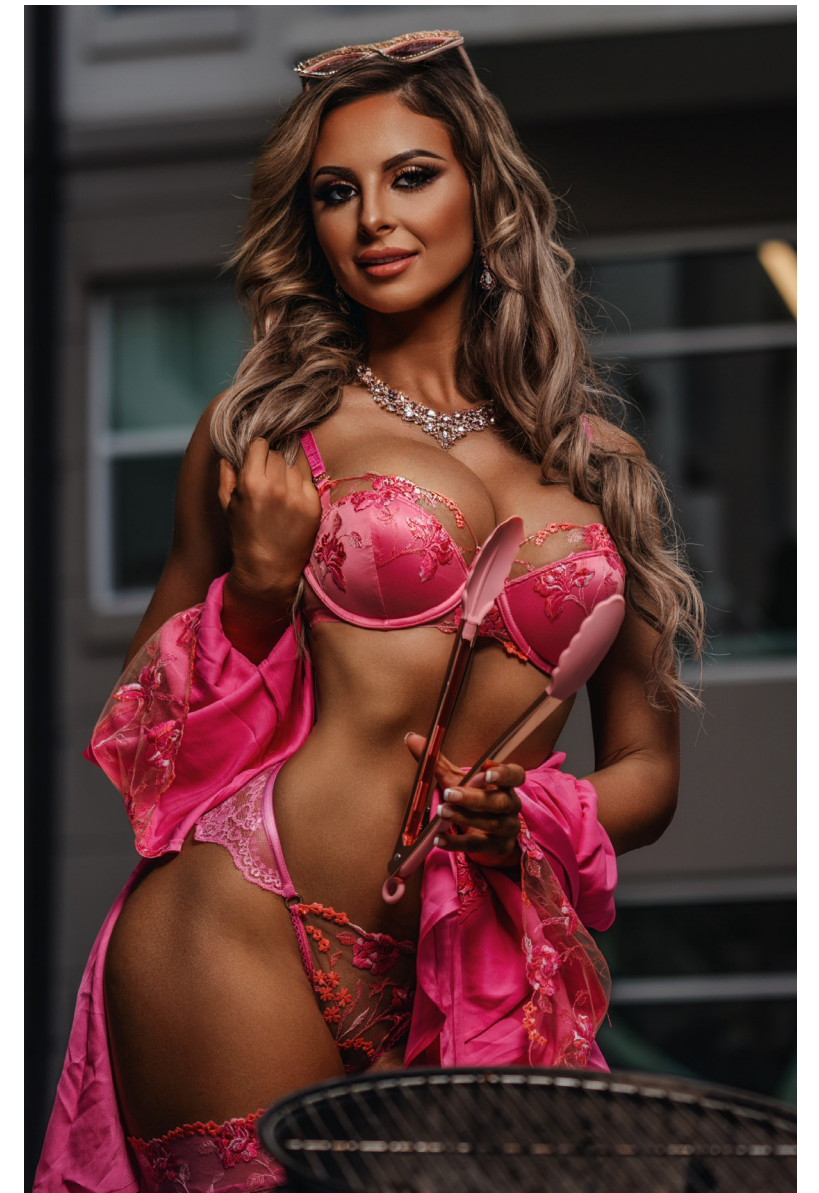
Beyond her poised, sleek, and captivating presence, Whitney is also vibrant and spirited. A fervent fitness enthusiast, she has more than proven her worthiness of the title. Last year marked her initial ascendancy to the top, a move that surprised only a few – after all, she currently boasts the finest physique in the industry.

Her unwavering consistency, commitment, and formidable presence have paved the way for her to make history by securing the title for the second consecutive year. We eagerly anticipate collaborating with her in 2024. But this year is wide open. Whitney Johns is not in the running this year setting the stage for a new woman to take home the Physique of the Year title.





I want to just keep growing, learning, inspiring, and becoming the best wrestler I can be. I would love to make an impact in the wrestling world that inspires others to pursue the industry



COVER ATHLETE

# HARLEY CAMERON

Discover the dynamic world of AEW wrestler Harley Cameron in our exclusive feature. Dive into her inspiring journey, fitness secrets, and the determination that makes her a true embodiment of strength.

PHOTOS BY @ ILLITE.FOTOS

HAIR & MAKEUP BY @DEAR.SALEM



# Harley Cameron is not just All Elite, she's also unstoppable.

A fusion of athleticism and grace, she has redefined what it means to be a woman in the world of wrestling and fitness modeling. Her journey, marked by relentless determination and a passion for excellence, inspires many. In this exclusive feature, Harley opens up about her rigorous training regimen, mental resilience, and the drive that propels her to new heights in and out of the ring.”

**Harley, you're making waves in the wrestling industry with AEW. How did you initially get into professional wrestling?**

Thank you! It's been an amazing journey so far that I'm extremely thankful for. Like many, I grew up watching wrestling. However, living in Australia, it never seemed like a possible career path because the big leagues were on the other side of the world, and it was extremely difficult to get a working permit for USA. So it was never something I could imagine would happen before coming to America. At the time, I was in the entertainment industry and the fitness industry in Australia as a personal trainer and theatre performer. Once I was able to relocate to America and was immersed again in the wrestling culture as an adult, I knew this was my opportunity to mix my passions in entertainment and athletics and follow a dream I thought was never possible! It's by far the most difficult, yet fulfilling thing I've ever done and I'm so grateful to be where I am today.

**As a fitness model, how do you balance your intense training regimen with your wrestling commitments?**

I find weight and cardio training to be a necessity, and something that helps me feel a sense of routine and happiness. I also find it very therapeutic, and therefore is a necessity in my day-to-day! Wrestling training (in-ring) is a whole other level of fitness and athleticism that I can't compare to anything else - it's very intense! I make sure to start my mornings with my gym routine, and generally train in-ring in the afternoons. This is a consistent routine for me at least 4-5 times a week. It's a lot of physical exertion, so the main things I prioritize to balance it all involve getting adequate food for the day, staying hydrated and getting good rest.

**What inspired you to pursue a career as a fitness model alongside your wrestling career?**

I was actually a fitness model long before I became a wrestler. Almost 19 years ago I was studying personal training and nutrition, and during that time I began implementing what I learned into my daily life. It subsequently lead me into getting into the best shape of my life, and I found that as motivation to compete in my first fitness show. I did very well, which lead me to gain sponsorships and attention in the fitness industry, which then led into fitness



BIRTHDAY January 4th  
HEIGHT 5'7"  
WEIGHT 130 lbs  
HOMETOWN Gold Coast,  
Australia  
CURRENT RESIDENCE  
Orlando, FL USA





HARLEY CAMERON





modeling and competing for many years.

**Could you share some insights into your workout routine? How do you keep yourself in such phenomenal shape?**

Generally speaking I have a set routine. Being on the road can change that some days, but I try to stick to what I know works for me. I'll start my day off early and do about 45 minutes of weights, and finish with 20-30 minutes of cardio. I train isolated muscle groups and usually use a split system of 3 lower body and 2 upper body days a week. I do cardio in HIIT style mostly to finish the session. The days that I'm in the ring to train will be afternoon sessions usually for about 3 hours. I have a lot of energy so I really enjoy working out. On days that I'm feeling like I need rest I will take it, but I always listen to my body and make sure I get adequate rest.

**Many people struggle with maintaining a healthy diet. How do you stay disciplined when it comes to nutrition?**

Studying nutrition has been a game changer to understanding what my body needs. I think of food as fuel, and when I was younger I was far more restrictive with what I ate, but as I gained an increasing knowledge of Macro nutrients and the different effects certain foods have on your body, gut health, dopamine levels, energy levels and much more, it began easier to eat things that I was once hesitant to consume. That knowledge essentially gave me better results aesthetically, and allowed me to have variety in my diet, which in turn resulted in healthy eating patterns. I do love food! I generally eat a Paleo based format, but of course enjoy the occasional cookie.

**Being the ultimate triple threat—wrestler, fitness model, and singer—how do you find time to focus on all these aspects of your career?**

Well thank you so much! I have always thrived in a busy and demanding environment. I feel I'm my best version of myself when I'm constantly on the go, and trying to grow and improve on my results. I think people find time for things that matter most to them, and I care about what I do - so it never feels like work, which makes it easier than it

sounds! I love what I do and feel lucky to be where I am, so I never want to take it for granted.

**Let's talk about your music career. You're a singer and now a rapper too! How do you feel your experience as a wrestler and fitness model influences your music?**

Music was my first-ever passion and is still a big part of my life today. I wouldn't say wrestling and fitness have had direct impacts on the majority of my music career as I was a professional singer for many years before I began training. I always compose things based on what I'm feeling at the time or if there's a story I want to tell, or a feeling I want to evoke. I can say that once I started wrestling I definitely started composing music more suited to that world though. Writing wrestling theme music has become one of my favorite things to do! And I have been lucky enough to compose some music for some amazing friends in the wrestling industry. Speaking in that regard, I try to write theme music that embodies the individual.

**Welcome back to the cover of Fitness Gurls. You once again look incredible on our cover. How do you feel about being a role model for fitness enthusiasts?**

Thank you for having me, it's an honor! I hope to inspire others to live a healthy lifestyle, and spread awareness of the physical and mental benefits that training and nutrition can provide to your life. I also hope I can spread awareness to the hard work that goes into the industries I'm in, but explain that this hard work also comes with incredible reward!

**What challenges do you face as a woman in the male-dominated world of professional wrestling, and how do you overcome them?**

I think it's a very exciting and progressive time to be in wrestling. I believe that the concept of "male dominated" isn't exactly what it seems. I believe in a general statistic point of view, the industry has been something that men have pursued in the past more than women have, therefore there are more male wrestlers in the business today. However, more women are becoming inspired and interested in the industry, and we are seeing some amazing things in the women's division and lots of support and encouragement for women to do more in wrestling! I see

INSPIRATION

## WHO INSPIRES HARLEY CAMERON

**In the high-octane world of wrestling, inspiration fuels the journey to greatness. In this insightful section, Harley Cameron shines a light on two remarkable individuals who have been pivotal in her wrestling odyssey. Their influence extends beyond the ring, shaping her approach, resilience, and technique. Join us as Harley pays tribute to these mentors, revealing how their guidance and example have been instrumental in carving her path to success and stardom in the wrestling universe.**

There are so many wrestlers that have inspired me past and present- that to name them all could take a while ! But the ones who I would have to say who have inspired me above all others are my coaches,

### Shawn Spears and Breeze

If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be who I am today, or where I am today in my career. They coached me from the ground up at Flatbacks Wrestling School in Orlando , and learning from two of the best professional wrestlers in the world is something I'm so thankful for. I still train with them weekly and am constantly learning and growing thanks to their dedication as coaches . If you ever read this , thank you for everything guys.



HARLEY CAMERON





so many more female wrestlers getting great opportunities and it's just continuing to grow. Also my male peers are extremely supportive, so there's honestly not anything to "overcome." I would love to see more women's matches in general throughout the wrestling world, but I think that's happening with the constant increase of women building the business up. It's a very exciting time to be in wrestling, regardless of gender.

**Your athleticism is evident in your wrestling style. How does your training for wrestling differ from your training for fitness modeling?**

Training for fitness modeling is easy compared to in the ring.

I had no idea how challenging wrestling would be as it's a different grind. And once you experience it, it only adds to your appreciation for what we do! Fitness modeling is a lot of weight training mixed with excellent nutrition, but doesn't need to push you in respect of areas such as cardiovascular training, explosiveness and power.

It's more strength-based and consistency. Wrestling is high intensity and there's so much more involved than what you achieve in a gym. You can be aesthetically impressive, but that won't translate to in the ring.

**When you're not training or performing, how do you unwind and take care of yourself?**

Funnily enough, training kind of is my way to "unwind." I'm a highly active person and it makes me feel good when I'm on the move. But if I really want to zone out, I love hanging out with my dogs or being in the ocean and outdoors.

**What advice would you give to aspiring wrestlers, fitness models, and singers who want to pursue multiple passions like you have?**

JUST GO FOR IT! For so long I was always told my dreams were cool but I needed a "realistic plan." I'm living proof that your dreams can be your plan. And if you dedicate yourself to something and work hard, anything is possible.

**How important is mental strength in your line of work, and what strategies do you use to stay mentally focused?**

Realistically, we are in a business that is very subjective and can be critiqued and also comes with things like online bullying and negativity at times. You have to have a thick skin, but also remember to not seek out the negativity. Focus on the good, and understand that everyone's going to have an opinion, and sometimes their opinions won't align with the truth.



Music was my first-ever passion and is still a big part of my life today.







**Can you tell us about a memorable moment in your wrestling career that has had a significant impact on you?**

I recently was in a storyline with a group called “The Acclaimed” where I had an in-ring segment with one of the guys, Anthony Bowens. The segment focused on me having an attraction to him, without knowing he was gay. He subsequently turned me down, and the entire arena started chanting, “He’s gay!” and such a supportive

and encouraging way for him. That moment was so amazing to see, and made me proud of where we are today in the world where something that has been so difficult for many to voice has become something that an entire stadium of fans is standing behind with encouragement and open arms. This happened during Pride Week in Chicago, and I’ll never forget how special that was to be a part of. It made me so proud of our company and our amazing fans.

**As a fitness model, you work with various brands. How do you choose the right partnerships that align with your values?**

I’m very picky with who I partner with. I’ve had some amazing sponsorships over the years, but have also had one or two which turned out to be learning experiences. I have a general rule that I won’t ever promote anything that I don’t genuinely love or use. I won’t sell out for anything that isn’t truthfully something I stand behind.

**What are your future goals in wrestling? Any exciting projects or aspirations we can look forward to?**

I want to just keep growing, learning, inspiring, and becoming the best wrestler I can be. I would love to make an impact in the wrestling world that inspires others to pursue the industry also.

**Do you have any pre-match rituals or superstitions that you follow before stepping into the ring?**

I always warm up and stretch, and like to listen to some music to pump me up before I go out!

**How do you handle criticism and negative feedback, both in the wrestling industry and as a public figure?**

Touching on this again, I avoid listening to negativity. Unless it’s critique from a coach or someone who I know is giving me valuable feedback, I try not to take things to heart. Any constructive criticism however, I will take on board and hope to learn and improve with.

**What’s your favorite aspect of being a professional wrestler, and what keeps you motivated to pursue this career?**

I love making people feel something. I love evoking emotion. If I can walk out and evoke an emotion with a crowd, that’s what gives me a rush and the thrill of what we do. I also love how each day is new, each opponent is unique and can teach me things, and the motivation comes from pure love of what we do and appreciation of the role I’m in.

**Finally, what message would you like to convey to your fans, who admire you as a wrestler, fitness model, and singer?**

I just want to say thank you. Thank you for following my journey and believing in me and inspiring me to do what I do. It’s thanks to you all that I feel proud of the person I am, encourages me to do better and hopefully leaves a positive impact to your life through these art forms.

HARLEY CAMERON





# Train Hard, Train Confident

In the hustle and bustle of modern life, staying fit and healthy can seem like a daunting task, especially for those constantly on the move. However, integrating simple health and fitness strategies into your daily routine can lead to significant improvements in physical and mental well-being. This guide offers practical tips for busy individuals looking to maintain a healthy lifestyle without compromising their schedules.

## 1. Prioritize Your Health Goals

Start by defining clear and achievable health goals. Whether it's losing weight, building muscle, increasing stamina, or simply staying active, having a concrete goal can provide the motivation you need to stay on track. Remember, your health objectives should align with your lifestyle and be realistic given your time constraints.

## 2. Efficient Workout Routines

Incorporate high-intensity interval training (HIIT) into your workout regimen. HIIT involves short bursts of intense exercise followed by brief periods of rest or lower intensity activity. These sessions can be as short as 20-30 minutes, making them ideal for busy schedules. The key to HIIT is consistency; even a few minutes daily can make a significant difference.

## 3. Nutrition on the Go

Proper nutrition is essential for maintaining energy levels and supporting your fitness goals. For busy people, meal prepping can be a lifesaver. Dedicate a few hours each week to prepare healthy meals and snacks. Opt for nutrient-dense foods like lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. If cooking isn't feasible, choose healthier options when eating out, such as salads, grilled proteins, and smoothies.

## 4. Stay Hydrated

Drinking enough water is crucial for overall health. It aids in digestion, keeps your skin healthy, and helps you stay energized. Carry a reusable water bottle with you throughout the day to ensure you're drinking enough fluids, especially before and after workouts.

## 5. Prioritize Sleep

Never underestimate the power of a good night's sleep. Sleep is when your body recovers from the day's activities, including exercise. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. If you have trouble sleeping,

establish a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading or meditation, to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.

## 6. Stress Management

Exercise is a fantastic stress reliever, but it's not the only tool at your disposal. Find activities that help you relax and de-stress, whether it's yoga, meditation, or simply spending time with loved ones. Managing stress is vital for maintaining both your mental and physical health.

## 7. Stay Active Throughout the Day

Incorporate small activities throughout your day to stay active. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, go for a walk during your lunch break, or do some stretching exercises while watching TV. These small actions can add up to a big difference in your overall fitness.

## 8. Keep a Fitness Journal

Track your progress with a fitness journal or an app. Recording your workouts, meals, and how you feel each day can provide valuable insights into what's working and what isn't. It's also a great motivational tool to see how far you've come.

## 9. Seek Professional Guidance

If you're unsure where to start or how to achieve your health goals, consider seeking advice from a fitness professional. Personal trainers can provide personalized workout plans and nutrition advice tailored to your lifestyle.

## 10. Be Patient and Consistent

Finally, remember that progress takes time. Be patient with yourself and stay consistent with your health and fitness routine. Celebrate small victories along the way and keep pushing towards your goals.

In conclusion, maintaining a healthy lifestyle amidst a busy schedule is entirely achievable with the right approach. By setting realistic goals, focusing on efficient workouts, prioritizing nutrition, and managing stress, you can train hard and train confidently, regardless of how hectic your life may be. Remember, the journey to better health is a marathon, not a sprint. Take it one step at a time and enjoy the process.





FITNESS  
GURLS

# NIKKI TREJO

Nikki Trejo, a remarkable fitness model and competitor, epitomizes the term “smoke show” with her inspiring presence. Renowned for having one of the world’s best physiques, Nikki’s dedication and achievements in fitness not only captivate but also motivate countless individuals, setting a new standard in the realm of physical excellence and personal empowerment.

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PHOTOS @ AURALIGHTPHOTOGRAPHY





“

Going to the gym for me is my therapy and my life.

**What inspired you to start your fitness journey, and how has it evolved over the years?**

Have always had some kind of little fitness routine. Coming from a Latina family we kept ourselves up body, esthetics, etc it was very much encouraged in my family. But, oddly never went to the gym. Gyms always overwhelmed me I felt very lost, one day a friend convinced me to go with her to a private gym I was hooked. Since that day I continued to challenge myself and I wanted more. So I stepped out of my comfort zone and went to a new gym where everything changed for me and fell in love with being a bikini competitor.

**Can you share your experience competing in the Bikini Division for the NPC? What were some of the challenges and highlights?**

Being a bodybuilding competitor in general regardless of the category takes mental fortitude and a tremendous amount of discipline. Bikini being the most petite has its challenges diet but, once again to be a competitor in this sport you have to be in 100 percent. It is a mental game as well not just physical.

**As a fitness model, how do you prepare for a photoshoot? Do you have any routines or rituals that help you get in the right mindset?**

I am so blessed that fitness is now my career full time ( I left my career as a Nurse to pursue coaching) it partners well my two worlds I need to be fit to model and fitness is my passion so it's a win-win. I prepare for my shoots with proper diet, good sleep, and beauty routines and most importantly I pray before asking for calmness and to be in the moment.

**Could you give us an insight into your typical training week? How do you balance different types of workouts?**

I train 6 days a week with my trainers, training different body parts every day on my 7th off day I hike or chill. Other than that I give my body rest, I'm big on recovery. I will always be that coach/trainer that has her coach/trainer- I believe it's important to stay on point and learn new things, mentorship, education, etc. I love my trainers. Training is a huge priority in my life it is part of my daily routine- I am lost without it! It is not an option and it's a nonnegotiable. Training helps keep me balanced and is great for my/people's mental health.

**Nutrition plays a crucial role in fitness. What is your approach to diet and nutrition, especially during competition prep?**

My approach to diet and button general I life a healthy lifestyle but, I will be honest I love sweets so I do allow myself to indulge in sometimes~ balance. When it comes to...











Prep Diet: Zero Exceptions! You weigh everything, you only eat what is in your diet plan that has been provided by your coaches that know the ins and outs about you! Prep is serious you have to entrust the right coaches to manipulate your body in the safest way. Prep is extremely demanding and a bit of a roller coaster~ it's called " a selfish sport" this is true because you don't get to partake in a lot while in prep- for me I live and still show up everywhere with my meal prep in hand but, it's not the same as partaking in family parties etc. bonding over eating snacking etc but it's ok, it's not forever! Your family should support you and understand, I am grateful mine does.

**As a fitness coach, what is your philosophy or approach when training your clients? How do you tailor your coaching to individual needs?**

Every individual is different/ unique I find it fascinating when I am on one learning what some people can and can not do and watching them over time hit little Milestones is priceless. Everyone is on a different journey custom-made for them~ not everyone has the same goals. Listening to what your client needs is very important~ they need to feel seen and heard, not all my clients want to be competitors and that is ok. I support any type of goal.

Work-Life Balance: Being a mother and a fitness professional must be demanding. How do you manage to balance your professional commitments with your personal life?

**What keeps you motivated, and how do you overcome days when you lack motivation or face obstacles?**

Going to the gym for me is my therapy and my life. Working out is not a dreadful chore for me, I love it, the environment, etc... I do have days where I am exhausted -- I power through. Get you some friends, and coaches to hold you accountable.

Influence and Inspiration: Who are your role models in the fitness industry, and how have they influenced your career?

**What have been some of the most memorable milestones in your fitness career so far?**

I placed 2nd in my very first bikini competition in the Masters category!!! That was such a beautiful feeling ~ that qualified me for the Championships where I placed 3rd!



**What advice would you give to someone just starting their fitness journey?**

First and foremost be ready mentally~ if you're heads not in it you will only be discouraged and give up before you give yourself a fair shot. Start at your pace where you feel comfortable, find a coach to guide and teach you~ and also support you on your journey. And don't worry about the people around you, just focus on yourself and see how beautiful things unfold.

**What are your future goals in the realms of fitness competition, modeling, and coaching?**

I have some wonderful opportunities and some big plans lined up with my coaching that I will be sharing soon, omg stay tuned, I feel so unbelievably grateful and blessed.

For my bikini competition ~ it's growing season, I'll be going back for my crown soon.

**How important is community and support in your fitness journey, and how do you foster these elements?**

Community is everything! I am big on community, support, encouragement, and women empowerment~ my career foundation is based on community and togetherness. I am very active and involved in my community~ I live for that shit!

**Is there a message or piece of advice you'd like to share with our "Fitness Gurls" readers, especially those who admire your work and journey?**

Be yourself, your people can't find you unless you are truly and genuinely yourself! love yourself~ it all starts with you, no one can give you the love you need to give yourself first! Give yourself some grace... life is beautiful and every day is a new day to start a new one. Always pray.



# The Science of Sweat: How Exercise Transforms Your Brain and Body

Exercise, often associated with improved physical fitness, goes beyond just sculpting a leaner physique. It is a catalyst for profound changes in both the brain and body, impacting our health, mood, and overall well-being. This article delves into the science behind how exercise, or the art of sweating, transforms us from the inside out.

## 1. Boosting Brain Power

When we exercise, our heart rate increases, pumping more oxygen-rich blood to the brain. This heightened blood flow stimulates the release of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein crucial for the growth and maintenance of nerve cells. BDNF facilitates the creation of new neural pathways, enhancing cognitive functions like memory, learning, and problem-solving. Regular exercise has been shown to increase the size of the hippocampus, the brain area involved in verbal memory and learning, suggesting a direct link between physical activity and improved brain health.

## 2. Mood Enhancement

Exercise is a natural mood lifter. Engaging in physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, often termed as 'feel-good' hormones. These chemicals in the brain act as natural painkillers and mood elevators, reducing stress and anxiety. Regular exercise has been found to have antidepressant effects, improving mood and lowering symptoms of depression and anxiety. It also stimulates the release of neurotransmitters like serotonin and norepinephrine, which can alleviate feelings of depression and foster a sense of well-being.

## 3. Improved Sleep Quality

Regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster and deepen your sleep. Exercise increases the body's temperature, and the post-exercise drop in temperature may promote falling asleep. Moreover, the energy depletion that occurs during exercise stimulates recuperative processes during sleep. However, timing is key – exercising too close to bedtime may have the opposite effect due to the stimulatory effect of exercise causing an increase in heart rate and alertness.

## 4. Combatting Chronic Diseases

Exercise plays a significant role in preventing and managing various chronic diseases. Regular physical activity can help control weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. It also enhances insulin sensitivity, which

is vital in preventing and managing type 2 diabetes. Additionally, engaging in weight-bearing exercises strengthens bones and muscles, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and arthritis.

## 5. Weight Management

While diet plays a crucial role in weight management, exercise is an essential component of a healthy weight loss plan. It helps burn calories and builds muscle, which in turn boosts metabolism. Moreover, muscle tissue burns more calories than fat tissue does, meaning that muscle mass is a key factor in losing weight and keeping it off.

## 6. Enhancing Immune Function

Regular, moderate exercise can boost the immune system by promoting good circulation, which allows the cells and substances of the immune system to move through the body freely and do their job efficiently. Exercise also slows down the release of stress hormones, which can protect against illness.

## 7. Age-Defying Effects

Exercise can have a remarkable anti-aging effect. It's known to increase the length of telomeres, the caps at the end of chromosomes, which help keep chromosomes from deteriorating. Shortened telomeres are associated with aging and increased health risks. Thus, by preserving the length of telomeres, exercise can contribute to longer cell life and overall youthfulness.

## 8. Social and Community Benefits

Exercise can also have significant social benefits. Participating in group sports, classes, or fitness clubs can help build a community and foster a sense of belonging. This social interaction can further enhance mental health and emotional well-being.

In conclusion, the science of sweat is deep and diverse. Exercise does more than just change how we look; it fundamentally alters our brain chemistry, mood, and body functions. It's a powerful tool for enhancing our physical and mental health, fighting off diseases, managing weight, and even delaying the aging process. As we continue to understand more about the profound effects of exercise, it becomes clear that incorporating regular physical activity into our lives is one of the best investments we can make for our long-term health and happiness.





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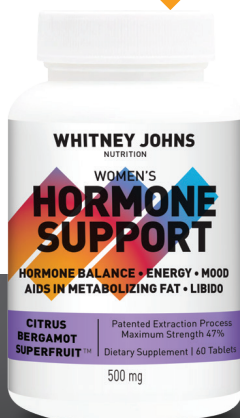


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